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There'll Be Some Changes Made

Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, presents a rather hapless figure now that his bureaucracy is under investigation for the blunders leading up to the Cuban fiasco. A dim grey man of the sort who normally live and move and have their obscure being in second-echelon bureaucratic leadership, Dulles was plucked from that comfortable limbo, in which he had spent most of his professional life, largely on the strength of the name he shared with his late brother, John Foster Dulles.

It was a mistake, but Democratic and Republican Administrations must share the blame for chronic miscasting in the role of CIA chief. And now President Kennedy is reportedly reluctant to move promptly against Dulles for fear of antagonizing GOP legislators. Apart from the fact that GOP legislators with any sense should repudiate Dulles—who is neither Republican nor Democrat, but bureaucrat—Mr. Kennedy is doing the nation a greater service than it yet knows by brisk, far-reaching action to reform the CIA.

The Kennedy plans apparently consist in part of transferring to the Defense Department the so-called "operational" portions of the CIA program—that is, both strategic and tactical activities such as those leading to the ill-fated Cuban invasion. This would leave to the agency only its "intelligence" (i.e., information-gathering) functions.

Furthermore, the President proposes to take a much closer hand himself in the direction of the CIA. This doesn't mean upgrading the National Security Council, which has oversight over the CIA, but which Mr. Kennedy has minimized, as he has Cabinet meetings, in favor of personal intercession; ultimately, however, it seems likely that the Security Council will (and should) recover some of its presently neglected discretionary powers, since there are limits to what even a young and vigorous Chief Executive can encompass in a day's work.

James Reston of The New York Times also reports from Washington that concurrently Mr. Kennedy intends to put the Office of Civil Defense Mobilization under the Department of Defense. This is a measure long advocated by Ohio's junior senator, Stephen M. Young, among others who are alarmed at the gross waste and inefficiency of the OCDM.

The moves in sum, notes Correspondent Reston, "reflect President Kennedy's belief that all forms of warfare, from all-out attack through subversive warfare to civil defense, should be centralized in the Pentagon." And while the moves are influenced by Mr. Kennedy's growing confidence in Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, they are from a long-range standpoint administratively sound as well.